

Unloading supplies at
Goma, Zaire.



U.S. Air Force (Andy Dunaway)

EUCOM and Sub-Saharan Africa

By NANCY J. WALKER and LARRY HANAUER

Sub-Saharan Africa is a region marked by both great promise and great peril. While some countries on the continent have begun to embrace democracy, move toward a market economy, and resolve long-standing conflicts, others suffer from ethnic tension, corruption, economic collapse, and waves of refugees. Both these prospects and difficulties pose challenges for the United

States. The task of containing or preventing conflict while supporting successes requires a skillful balance of diplomacy, military resources, and humanitarian assistance.

The Armed Forces are uniquely positioned to play an important role in U.S. engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa. Since the end of the Cold War, we have deployed forces to Africa to evacuate Americans, provide humanitarian assistance, and assist the United Nations and other organizations in multinational peace operations. In addition to efforts on the ground, the U.S. military can help African states and regional organizations develop the political maturity, military professionalism, and economic growth necessary to solve their own problems and attain long-term stability.

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As U.S. Government agencies make tough decisions on mission priorities, the Department of Defense (DOD) has become, in the eyes of many in both Africa and America, the agency with the deepest pockets and highest-profile activities on the continent. In this age of declining budgets and scarce resources, however, it is important that DOD assets intended for Africa be strategically and carefully allocated to further U.S. priorities.

The proactive role performed by U.S. European Command (EUCOM)—which has an area of responsibility (AOR) that includes 37 of the 48 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa—is central to U.S. strategy in the region. Its overall commitment to robust and forward-looking engagement on the continent and willingness to dedicate resources to it helps shape U.S. policy there.

Unique Challenges

While the United States has limited strategic interests in Africa, events there might require significant American involvement and resources. Problems in this region are political, economic, social, and military in nature

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and stem from both external sources and internal instability. Future problems could come from failed states and the fragility of apparent successes in nation-building. Specific difficulties include:

- the collapse of Zaire, Angola, Nigeria, Sudan, and other countries which could set off civil wars, halt the flow of oil, create waves of refugees, and threaten resident American citizens
- ongoing politico-military conflicts and resulting humanitarian crises in the former Zaire, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola, Sierra Leone, the Central African Republic, Sudan, and Uganda
- unprofessional, overstrength, and underpaid militaries with the potential for promoting *coups d'état*, human rights abuses, and political instability
- the increasing influence of Libya, Iran, and other pariah states, particularly in



countries such as The Gambia where actions deemed unacceptable by the international community (like rigging elections) have resulted in the receipt of few resources from abroad

- ethnic tension, weak economies, narcotics smuggling, unequal income distribution, poor infrastructures, dysfunctional governments, and various other factors which have negative impacts on the stability of governments and the health and prosperity of indigenous societies

- the opposite situation in countries such as Senegal and Botswana where the militaries are professional and contribute to political development and long-term stability

- the emergence of democratic institutions in Mali, Zambia, and Benin as well as the corruption of "free" elections in The Gambia, Niger, and Nigeria

- support for and proactive partnership with the defense establishment in post-apartheid South Africa, which plays an

extremely important role in stabilizing the situation across Sub-Saharan Africa.

A range of political, economic, and military assets are required to address these challenges and achieve primary U.S. objectives. The *United States Security Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa* issued by the Secretary of Defense in 1995 outlines three policy goals that invite substantial and direct involvement: promoting peace by preventing, managing, or resolving conflicts; providing humanitarian assistance to alleviate suffering and hunger; and fostering democracy and respect for human rights.

The objectives of the EUCOM theater strategy, as found in the *Strategy of Engagement and Preparedness*, include



Rwandan refugee camp at Kigali.

Combat Camera Imagery (Val Gempis)

Marines arriving in Brazzaville, Congo.



U.S. Air Force (Greg L. Davis)

assisting democratization, responding to humanitarian crises, and playing a role in pursuing vital U.S. interests, especially protecting American citizens.

Many assets for attaining these objectives come from the arsenals of the four geographical commands with assigned responsibilities for Sub-Saharan Africa—EUCOM in the vast majority of the region, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) in the Horn of Africa, U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) in Madagascar and island states along the coast of the Indian Ocean, and U.S. Atlantic Command (ACOM) in the nations of Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe (see map).

EUCOM Activities

Because EUCOM has focused its resources and attention on addressing U.S. interests in Europe both during the Cold War and in the post-Cold War period of NATO expansion as well as peace operations in Bosnia, Africa has not been a major priority. Under the

commander in chief, U.S. European Command (CINCEUR), General George Joulwan, the command has dramatically increased its activities there. General James Jamerson, the deputy commander in chief, has spent more time on the ground in Africa than his immediate predecessors, building relationships with and improving access to

civilian defense officials and senior military officers. His visits to Angola and active role in the peace process, for example, helped further rapprochement in that country's long-standing civil war. The contacts he cultivated during a trip to Uganda in 1996 facilitated the swift approval by that country of the U.S. request to utilize Entebbe airport during Operation Guardian Assistance, a multinational humanitarian relief

Special Forces
protecting fire fighters,
Liberia.



1st Combat Camera Squadron (Paul R. Caron)

mission mounted in eastern Zaire during November 1996. These efforts have been assisted by the EUCOM political adviser, Ambassador Joe Wilson, a foreign service officer who has spent much of his career in Africa.

EUCOM activities from joint exercises to chaplain exchanges are crucial to U.S. objectives in Africa. The command's strategic vision states that "port visits, combined exercises, and visits by general officers play an important role in maintaining our relationships and influence. Security assistance in all its forms is often the prime form of our interaction with the nations of this region." Its activities include:

- promoting peace by preventing, managing, or resolving conflicts
- supporting development of an African crisis response initiative (assessments by EUCOM teams in several African nations as an effort to enhance the capabilities of regional militaries for timely and efficient participation in international peace and humanitarian operations)
- establishing a military liaison office in Monrovia where EUCOM is evaluating the needs of the West African peacekeeping force in Liberia, supervising delivery of U.S.-provided equipment, and furnishing military advice to the U.S. ambassador
- helping the Organization of African Unity (OAU) develop a conflict management center and, in particular, a conflict management exercise.

Fostering Democracy

Efforts to professionalize African militaries are crucial tools in promoting democratic values and institutions. Joint combined exchange and training exercises (JCETs) are integral to EUCOM engagement in Africa. Designed to provide training for U.S. troops, these exercises have the added benefit of training African forces. The approximately 25 exercises conducted each year—on light infantry tactics, leadership, and the role of apolitical military institutions in a democratic system—have been cited by senior civilian and military leaders as critical in professionalizing African militaries.

EUCOM conducts two multinational regional exercises each year which provide training in command and control and give Africans experience in operating in a multinational environment and with U.S. forces, which will greatly facilitate their participation in future international contingency operations. FY97 will feature exercises in Mali and Namibia. In addition, medical exercises are conducted twice each year to provide training in preventative medicine as well as improve overall health services. An exercise was held in Mali in September 1996, and Benin and Sierra Leone will receive training during FY97.

Finally, in an effort to establish a course for African civilian officials and military officers on defense planning and management in democratic societies, EUCOM is working with the Office of the Secretary of Defense to explore the establishment of an African security studies center.

Humanitarian Assistance

EUCOM is helping Mozambique, Rwanda, and Namibia develop sustainable humanitarian de-mining efforts to reduce civilian suffering and economic hardship. U.S. forces employ a train-the-trainer approach which enables host countries to continue these programs after their departure.

Americans were pre-deployed for Guardian Assistance to Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya in support of a multinational force organized to assist hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees in eastern Zaire. The main body of the force was never deployed since more than 100,000 refugees returned to Rwanda on their own.

In the wake of a Hutu-led genocide that claimed hundreds of thousands of Rwandan lives, several hundred Rwandan refugees faced death from cholera each day in overcrowded camps on both sides of the Rwanda-Zaire border. EUCOM deployed water purification units to the area for three months which ended the health crisis and enabled nongovernmental agencies to again provide relief services during Operation Support Hope in July 1994.

EUCOM also is key to accomplishing the unstated but perhaps most crucial U.S. objective, ensuring the safety of Americans and third-country nationals by evacuating U.S. Mission and other personnel from danger spots. Most noncombatant evacuations and embassy departures have arisen in Africa, including the Central African Republic (1996), Liberia (1996), Sudan (1996), and Zaire (1991, 1993, and 1997). Excellent and proactive contingency planning—sometimes conducted in conjunction with allies such as France in the Central African Republic—help to guarantee that these operations go smoothly. EUCOM teams also



Unloading C-141 at
Libreville, Gabon.

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travel to the region to work with our embassy staffs to ensure emergency plans are thorough and up to date.

Resource Allocation

EUCOM is only one of many DOD components active in Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, a dozen agencies administer various programs. Training and assistance programs are conducted by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the military services (including the Reserve components), and U.S. Special Operations Command; Departments of State, Commerce, Agriculture, Justice, Labor, Transportation, Treasury, and Health

interagency communication must improve to increase the effectiveness of U.S. programs on the continent

and Human Services; and Agency for International Development, Peace Corps, and U.S. Information Agency. Overlap and lack of coordination and collaboration often mean that different agencies may duplicate efforts or even work at cross-purposes. In a period of diminishing resources, interagency communication must improve to increase the effectiveness of U.S. programs on the continent.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense, working in concert with other DOD components, is developing a

comprehensive strategy for engagement in Africa. It will identify U.S. interests and provide a blueprint for allocating resources to pursue them. It will also identify countries in which an infusion of resources could either save a state from disaster or help a capable military enhance its skills to become a valuable partner in international operations. A central element of this strategy is thus prioritizing U.S. interests so that resources can be allocated to countries where we have the greatest stakes and can make the largest impact. This is a crucial step since the Cold War tactic of providing resources to virtually every country in Africa to

keep the Soviet Union from gaining a stronghold can no longer apply. The EUCOM strategy echoes the need for prioritization by pointing out that engagement requires us "to systematically focus our efforts where we feel that they can make a difference." JCETs, international military education and training, and other resources thus should go toward professional development. Prospective partners such as Senegal, Ghana, and Ethiopia—which have offered to contribute forces to an African crisis response initiative and share the burden of conducting peace operations in the future—should receive priority assistance.

EUCOM and other U.S. Government agencies operating in the region must better prioritize the allocation of resources. All too often an ambassador

or a zealous desk officer in Washington influence the military and others who allocate resources to support programs in countries in which there are few U.S. interests and only limited security concerns. As available resources decline and many agencies continue to reduce their presence overseas, DOD is often perceived as the only U.S. Government agency with available assets. On balance we must resist pressure to allocate scarce defense resources to countries in which the United States has limited interests.

U.S. interests in Sub-Saharan Africa have changed greatly since the end of the Cold War, yet our security strategy for the region has only begun to respond to new challenges. Rather than simply distributing resources to pro-Western or anti-Soviet clients, the United States has started to constructively address Africa's security problems and has thus worked to minimize new challenges to U.S. security. Programs that professionalize African militaries, encourage democracy, alleviate suffering, mitigate humanitarian disasters, and allow governments to solve their own problems have had a tremendous impact on the effectiveness of U.S. policy in the region. The major role played by EUCOM and other regional commands in Sub-Saharan Africa has made these efforts possible.

As the United States continues to develop partnerships with the defense establishments of this region, EUCOM and other DOD components must improve their process of setting priorities and allocating resources. A continued high-level commitment to Africa by geographical commands and Washington is instrumental to furthering U.S. engagement and achieving objectives. **JFQ**